

# **First-Term Airmen's Center Briefing About Acquaintance/Date Rape**

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# Acquaintance/Date Rape

- ❖ **What is date rape?**
- ❑ **How often does it occur?**
- ❑ **What are the causes of date rape?**
- ❑ **What you can do to avoid situations that might lead to date rape.**
- ❑ **Danger signals: Watch out for these men.**
- ❑ **What should you do if someone tries to force sexual activity on you?**
- ❑ **What to do if you are raped.**
- ❑ **What are the effects of date rape?**
- ❑ **Legal implications.**

# What is date rape?

**Being subjected to unwanted sexual intercourse, oral sex, anal sex, or other sexual contact through the use of force or threat of force.**

Sexual coercion is defined as unwanted sexual intercourse, or any other sexual contact subsequent to the use of menacing verbal pressure or misuse of authority. (Koss, 1988)

# How often does it occur?

- College student population of 3,187 females and 2,972 males was surveyed:
  - 1 in 4 women surveyed was a victim of rape or attempted rape.
  - An additional 1 in 4 women was touched sexually against her will, or was a victim of sexual coercion.
  - 84% of those raped knew their attacker.
  - 57% of those rapes happened while on dates.
  - 1 in 12 male students had committed acts that met the legal definitions of rape or attempted rape.
  - 84% of those men who committed rape said what they did was definitely not rape.
  - 16% of the male students who committed rape and 10% of those who attempted a rape took part in episodes involving more than 1 attacker.

## ❖ Responses of the Victims:

- Only 27% of those women whose sexual assault met the legal definition of rape thought of themselves as rape victims.
- 42% of the rape victims did not tell anyone about their assaults.
- Only 5% of the rape victims reported the crime to the police.
- Only 5% of the rape victims sought help at rape-crisis centers.
- Whether they had acknowledged their experience as a rape or not, 30% of the women identified as rape victims contemplated suicide after the incident.
- 82% of the victims said the experience had permanently changed them. (Koss, 1988)

# What are the causes of date rape?

- There is no one direct cause of date rape:
- Men are taught at a very early age to be aggressors; they participate in aggressive team sports, are encouraged to be competitive, not to give up, to keep on trying.
- Women are socialized to be more passive, dependent, to be peace-makers, to avoid scenes, to be “lady-like.”

- ❖ **Communication between men and women is often problematical, especially in the realm of sex.**
- **The last few decades have seen a general loosening of sexual standards.**

**Acquaintance rape is not simply a crime of passion, or merely a result of miscommunication.**

***Rape is violence against a woman.***

# **What You Can Do to Avoid Situations That Might Lead to Date Rape:**

**You can't always avoid date rape.  
Nevertheless, there are some things you can  
do to  
minimize your chances of being raped:**

- ❧ **Set sexual limits.**
- **Decide early if you would like to have sex.**
- **Do not give mixed messages: be clear.**
- **Be alert to unconscious messages you may  
be giving.**

- Be forceful and firm.
- Be independent and aware on your dates.
- Do not do anything you do not want to just to avoid a scene or unpleasantness.
- Be aware of specific situations in which you do not feel relaxed and in charge.

• If things start to get out of hand, be loud in protesting, leave, go for help.

- Trust your gut-level feelings.
- Be aware that alcohol and drugs are often related to acquaintance rape.
- Avoid falling for such lines as “You would if you loved me.”

- ☛ **If you are unsure of a new acquaintance, go on a group or double date.**
- ☛ **Have your own transportation, if possible, or taxi fare.**
- **Avoid secluded places where you are in a vulnerable position.**
- **Be careful when you invite someone to your home or you are invited to his home.**

- ❖ Examine your attitudes about money and power.
- Socialize with people who share your values.

# Danger Signals. Watch Out for These Men

- ✿ Unfortunately, a nice, normal man can turn into a date rapist. However, there are some men who are more likely to be sexually aggressive than others. Watch out for:

**Men who do not listen to you, ignore what you say, talk over you or pretend not to hear you.**

✿ **Men who ignore your personal space  
boundaries.**

- **Men who express anger or aggression towards women as individuals or in general.**
- **Men who do what they want regardless of what you want.**

- ☛ **Men who try to make you feel guilty, or accuse you of being “uptight” if you resist their sexual overtures.**
- **Men who act excessively jealous or possessive.**
- **Men who have wrong or unrealistic ideas about women (for example, “women are meant to serve men”).**
- **Men who drink heavily.**

# **What Should You Do If Someone Tries to Force Sexual Activity on You?**

- **Stay calm and think. Figure out what your options are and how safe it is to resist.**
- **Say “no” strongly. Do not smile, do not act friendly or polite.**
- **Say something like “Stop it. This is rape.”**

- **Look for an escape route.**
- **Act quickly, if possible.**
- **Ask yourself if it is safe to resist.**

**If the man is **unarmed**, then you have many options, including:**

- **Fight back physically.**
- **Run away.**
- **Say you have to use the bathroom, and then leave.**
- **Use passive resistance (throw up).**

- ❧ Use intimidation (lie; tell him your male roommate is on the way home; tell him you have herpes or VD.)
- Try to talk him out of it - try to appeal to his humanity, his sense of decency.
- Gain his confidence so that he might let his guard down and you can escape.

- Try to get him to see you as an individual person. Make him aware of the effect he is having on you. Tell him that he is hurting you.

If the man is **armed**, then:

- Try to talk him out of it.
- Try passive resistance.

# What To Do If You Are Raped:

- » Go to a friend.
- Get medical attention.
- Report the attack to police and your command.

- Consider whether you want to file charges with the police.
- Get help and support, such as counseling.  
*(People Against Rape: 722-7273)*
- Do not blame yourself.

# What Are The Effects of Date Rape?

Different people react to stress and trauma differently. However, most rape victims go through definable stages of rape trauma syndrome. This syndrome is comprised of three parts: **trauma, denial and resolution.**

# **Trauma:**

- **Fear of being alone.**
- **Fear of men.**
- **Sexual problems.**
- **Depression.**

# Trauma:

- ↳ **Fear of retaliation.**
- ↳ **Afraid to trust.**
- **Concern over reactions of family/friends.**
- **Physical problems.**

# Trauma:

- **Feelings of anger, helplessness, guilt, pain, embarrassment, or anxiety.**

# **Denial:**

**Not wanting to talk about it.**

# **Resolution:**

- **Dealing with fears and feelings.**
- **Regaining a sense of control over life.**

# Legal Implications

- ☛ **Women who have been raped by an acquaintance have the same options as those raped by strangers. They can press criminal and/or civil charges against the man who raped them.**
- **In general, date rapes are often difficult to prove. A gun or knife is rarely use and so it is harder for a woman to prove that she was forced to have sex. It is almost always his word against hers.**

# Legal Implications

- ➊ The man's attorney may argue that the woman "wanted" to have sex with his client, did so, and then thought better of it and so charged rape.
- ➋ The woman has to prove she did not want sex, resisted, and was overpowered.

# Legal Implications

- ☞ Unfortunately, date rapists rarely rape only once.
- If a woman does go ahead and press charges, there is a chance she will be able to stop the rapist from hurting other people.
- Pressing charges also helps many rape victims regain a sense of control over their lives; they are taking some positive action.

# Legal Implications

- ❧ A woman may also have the option of suing the man who raped her.
- ❧ Again, since date rape is so difficult to prove, a woman might spend a great deal of money in attorney's fees and lose the case.

*This material was taken from two sources: (1) A paper written by Jean O'Gorman Hughes,*

*Research Associate, and Bernice R. Sandler, Executive Director, Project on the Status and*

*Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, April 1987. (2) An article entitled*

*"Perspectives on Acquaintance Rape," written by David G. Curtis, Ph.D.*